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NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE

ARTHUR PALMER HUDSON

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NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE

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NOTE ON "THE NORTH CAROLINA HILLS"

By D. K. Wilgus
[Mr. Wilgus is Editor of Kentucky Folklore.]

In The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore (III, 477) is a single text entitled "The North Carolina Hills," for which the editors were able to discover no parallels. That the text may have relatives is suggested by a commercial recording released in 1929: "The Hills of Tennessee" by Byrd Moore, Columbia 15536-D. The recorded song is a variant of "Two Little Orphans" set to an unusual tune and provided with the chorus:

> How I love the dear old hills,
> How my heart with longing fills,
> Many a charm in life for me,
> Those hills of Tennessee.

It is probable that the tune was the vehicle which added this chorus to "Two Little Orphans." I have been unable to obtain copies of the following recordings, which may provide fuller texts: Sid Hampton, "Hills of Tennessee," Columbia 15583-D; Donaldson Trio, "Hills of Tennessee," Bluebird 5003. (It is perhaps only a coincidence that the Byrd Moore recording also includes a variant of the North Carolina ballad "Frankie Silvers.")

Western Kentucky State College
Bowling Green, Kentucky

THE TREATMENT OF SNAKE-BITE IN CHAPEL HILL IN THE 1930's

By Roy M. Brown

The small daughter of one of the janitors of the University was bitten by a snake. The father killed the snake, a small copperhead, and then brought the child from their home, twelve miles out in the country, to Chapel Hill in search of a doctor. It was late afternoon, and no doctor was in his office. A young man in one of the grocery stores, the son of a rather prominent citizen of the town and the county, told the father that an old man who worked at the store could cure snake-bites. The father went in search of the old man, who had gone home. The old man gathered herbs and made a tea with which he dosed the child. On the way home the janitor stopped at a filling station and incidentally told about the child's having been bitten by a snake. The filling station man suggested a "mad-stone," and informed the anxious father that Mr. F. in Chapel Hill had such a stone. The janitor turned back, found Mr. F., and the "mad-stone" was applied. The janitor said the stone "stuck" to the wound, an indication that it was "drawing out the poison." The next afternoon, however, the child's leg was still badly swollen. The father took her to Dr. Hayes at Hillsboro, who did whatever he could at that late hour, and soundly scolded the father about the "mad-stone."

The child recovered. The father was uncertain whether to credit the recovery to the old man and his herbs, to the "mad-stone," or to the physician. I believe he was more impressed by the "mad-stone."

J.H.

TWO MOUNTAIN PORTRAITS

By Rebecca Cushman

[Born to a New England father and a Carolina mother, Miss Cushman has spent most of her life in her birth-place, Asheville, sojourning at times in Chapel Hill and Hillsboro. She received her formal education in public and private schools at Asheville and Raleigh and the Curry School in Boston, and taught a mountain school for one year. Most of her time, however, has been spent in observing, reading, and writing, in the latter activity as a special correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor. Her publications include "The Revival," Atlantic Monthly, September 1933, and Swing Your Mountain Gal, Sketches of Life in the Southern Highlands (New York and Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934). Swing Your Mountain Gal, in racy and supple blank verse, has many delightful sketches that anticipate the following prose account of Gus and Gladys.

[Jeanne Dunphey (Mrs. Fitzgerald) Hudson, who drew the sketch of Gus and Gladys, was born and grew up in New Jersey, attended art schools in Philadelphia and at Duke and Carolina, and worked as a professional illustrator in Philadelphia, New York, and Atlanta. She contributed five or six landscapes, portraits, and other canvases to the Students' Exhibit in Person Hall in June 1956. Mrs. Hudson is a Chapel Hill housewife, mother of two fine boys.]

The Mule and the Circus Rider

Something over twenty years ago--before the National Park took over--there was an old man living up in the Smokies whom we shall call Gus. Old Gus was what might have been called an itinerant worker--but individual style. Just he and the mule would come. He knew everybody, and when he picked your farm to work on there was nothing you could do about it. He and the mule would be there before you got up--or soon after--Gladys tied under a tree limb looking glossy and smug; for this mule knew her importance.

Old Gus always began by building up tremendous prestige for Gladys. "Don't spit or she'll kick," he'd say. Gus would work hard at any job you gave him to do, and for any number of hours, for he had prodigious strength. He would sleep on a cot in the barn or the tool house. But there was one condition. You had to respect the mule. She was his pride, his joy, his one possession of value. Indeed, she was his home. She was the thing that gave his life a feeling of continuity, security, dignity, freedom--the mule and his memory of "Mother." No conversation escaped that memory: "Mother said," "Mother did," "Mother used to . . ."

"Mother" had been the circus rider who on a white horse had jumped through the burning hoop. Later she had married a mountain man and gone to live 'way back in a wild and lonesome country. Their one child was a son. After her husband died the little circus rider and her boy lived alone together in the far-away cabin--this fierce and fearless girl who hadn't been afraid to leap through fire. She taught her child about the stars and the constellations, and how to tell time and the seasons by them. And she taught him how to save his money. She used to keep hers in a tin can buried under the rocks by the door step. When she dug it up once in so often--when the owl hooted too long--she would count it by the light of a candle while Gus stood outside the door with his gun. (And in the after years when Gus was alone, he, too, counted his money secretly, furtively, over and over, again and again, until they said the money was ready to drop to pieces.)

"Mother" used to say to him, "Ef you ever bring a gal here who sets on my porch in a rockin' cheer and rocks, I'll bust it over her head!" "Mother" was a hard worker. She didn't believe in a rocking chair, for it was, to her, the symbol of the shiftless woman. She had branded her son with the iron and fire of her own being, with her image alone, --and Gus had never married.

But when Gus rode his mule the circus inheritance shone through. His well-knit body was as upright as a major general's. His long, sandy mustache bristled out left and right like challenging sabers. His blue eyes flashed with a sort of wild, exultant joy. And, with his legs held stiffly out at a reckless forty-five degree angle on either side of Gladys' gleaming brown body, he looked ready to charge the elephant!

A Man of Honor

Monty Ridgewood always pares his finger nails with his pocket knife before he begins to test his guitar. He is going to sing a ballad for you. This is a leisurely and thoughtful operation--this fingernail paring--punctuated by friendly remarks.

"Yes," he's saying, "I'm a seventh son of a seventh son, and that gives me devil powers, but I've never used 'em. Some folks do, but I never have." He disposes of this consideration as quietly as a temperate man refusing a drink, an honest man refusing to steal, a friendly man refusing to be unkind; for Monty is all these things.

His nails being finished, our musician now takes a moment to launch into an illustration while he softly, slowly tunes the strings. "They was some folks that used to live around here," he is saying, "who had a cow they thought a heap of. And they was a neighbor that got mad at 'em, and she bewitched that cow so she couldn't give no milk. Well, the owner of the cow she set to work to take the spell off and to find out who it was that put the spell on. She got her seven nails an' she tuck one of 'em and wrote that woman's name in an oven pan, an' she made a cross mark right through it. Then she put all the nails in the pan and put it on the hot coals, and left it fur about an hour.

"Well, the next day that witch-woman, she tuck sick. She was bad off. She sent for the woman who owned the cow, and she told her what she'd done. Well, sir, quick as she confessed it the cow started givin' her milk again an' the woman she got well." (Pause) "They never had no more trouble with the cow."

You are recalling the belief in witches so prevalent in New England in those years of long ago; and you are becoming aware of how the shadow of these almost-forgotten days has lingered in these cut-off coves and valleys. But, be it said, it is an ever-lessening shadow and one seldom finds it now.

Monty has finished the tuning. He leans back with a happy smile and plucks a deep, rippling chord on the strings. His name isn't really Monty, but you may be one of those thousands of visitors to the World's Fair grounds at Chicago who stopped by the little log cabin from the Southern Highlands and heard him sing some of its ballads. This time he's going to sing:

Pretty Saro

Down in some lone valley in a far lonely place,
Where the wild birds do whistle and their notes do increase;
There's nothing that grieves me nor troubles my mind
Like leaving Pretty Saro, my darling, behind.

My love she won't have me, I well understand,
She wants some freeholder and I have no land;
I cannot maintain her with silver and gold
And all of the fine things that my love's house should hold.

O, I wish I were a poet, and could write a fine hand,
I'd write her a letter from this distant land;
I'd send it by the waters where the island o'erflow
That I think of Pretty Saro wherever I go.

I wish I were a dove and had wings and could fly,
It's to my love's dwelling this night I'd draw nigh.
I'd sit in her window all night long and cry
That for love of Pretty Saro I gladly would die.

TWO REVENANTS

By Charles F. Smith

[The Reverend Charles F. Smith is pastor of a large Baptist church in the suburbs of Durham. He grew up in Georgia, where he heard the following stories. Shortly he will remove to Swannanoa, where he will do human-relations work in the school there and continue his preaching.]

1. The White Pigeon

Mrs. Alma Jordan Joiner died at her home, near Dudley, Georgia, on June 14, 1926. As she was native of Washington County, her body was taken to Tennille, Georgia, some sixty miles away from her home, for burial.

When the family left the Joiner home for this journey, the house was closed. Every window in the room where she had died was closed and locked. The one fire-place in the room had been stopped up tightly for the Summer.

Yet, when the family returned from the funeral service, a snow-white pigeon was found fluttering about the room where Mrs. Joiner had passed away. The family released the bird, and it flew away.

The presence of the pigeon in the room was accepted by the family as a comforting sign, though they are not given to the acceptance of common superstitions, being college-educated and of high social standing in the community.

2. The Little White Dog

Many of the stories told to me by my grandfather when I was a little boy remain with me vividly. One was about an old gentleman of his acquaintance.

This old gentleman lived near my grandfather's house when the latter was a young man. He had as his constant companion a little white terrier. The old man died, and, soon after, so did the little dog.

A large number of people reported that while driving past the old man's house, late of an afternoon, they had seen a little white dog trot from the yard of the house and run slowly ahead of their buggies or surries. The dog never slackened his pace, and would never respond when called. Some distance from the house he would suddenly disappear and could not be seen again. This apparition occurred after both the old man and the dog were dead, and there were no other dogs about the house.

WITCHCRAFT IN CHAPEL HILL

Collected by Paul Green

[Mr. Green contributed "A Harnett Hag" to Vol. II, No. 1, and is sketched in that issue. Since then he has written a historical pageant, Wilderness Road, commemorating the hundredth anniversary of Berea College, and has been awarded an honorary Litt. D. by the University of North Carolina.]

1. Hub and His Snake

Zonie, a Negro boy, and I were cleaning up Mrs. Lay's yard, and we had to go out to Sam Lloyd's in the country to get a little mowing machine. As we drove along we passed a run-down filling station kept by a Negro man. The Negro man was sitting on the bench leaning against the wall.

"Look a there at him," said Zonie. "His name is Jackson Long. Stingy--oh, my Lord! I owed him one cent once and 'cause I didn't get back on Monday morning to pay him he told all around in the neighborhood that Zonie Lippert couldn't nohow be trusted."

"You mean one cent, Zonie?"

"Mean one cent. But that's the way it is," he went on, as we drove up the road. "A man can save and scrimp and scrounge like that, and then bad luck comes and gits him. Last week he had twenty-five hundred dollars in his pocket and he went down to the 'Sociation meeting. Twenty-five hundred dollars."

"Gracious," I said, "Why would he go around with that much money in his pocket?"

"He had sold off a piece of land to Mr. Dode Jones, and it being Saturday night he couldn't go to the bank in Carrboro'til Monday morning. And he didn't want to go to the 'Sociation and leave it in his ramshackly old filling station for fear somebody would take it. So he had it on him in his pocket. And what you reckon happened to him? Why, somebody spelled him while he was there and just got that money right away from him. And he ain't never going to see nary a brownie of it any more."

"What do you mean, 'spelled him'?" I queried.

"Just that, Mr. Green. Aw, the people works spells on you all through this country here round and about."

"Zonie, you don't believe that."

"Shore, I believe it. Take that house right over there we're passing. There was a fellow in there--lived there once but moved up North now. He had the worst spell a-tall. His name was Hub. I used to play with him. Him and me was about the same age. Well, sir, somebody had it in for him. Might have been a girl, for all I know. Anyhow they fed him some pizen out of a Co-Cola bottle, snake pizen it was, and it had a spell in it. And you know what? That boy had snakes all under his skin. You could see the pattern of 'em. I've looked at his arm many a time and there you could see the shape of the snakes in his skin."

"You mean you really saw the snakes?"

"Yessuh, I've seen 'em. And he got worse and worse. And his mammy and daddy and the neighbors met together and said there weren't no doubt about it at all--they had to take him to that root doctor up there beyond. Maybe you've heard of him."

"No. What is a root doctor, Zonie?"

"With all your knowledge, and you don't know that! Lord, Mr. Green. Well, some people calls 'em dust-doctors. Sometimes they have a root with a spell on it they can work strange things with. Then again some of 'em has dust out of the graveyard, from the grave of a man that's been hanged or burnt in the

electric chair. Well, that's what they are--call 'em root doctors or dust-doctors."

"How do they get their power, Zonie?"

"Well, sir, the best way to get it outn a black cat, one in which they ain't nary a speck of white. And take you a iron pot of hot scalding water and put that cat in there alive and jam a led on it. And then you hop up and stand on that led. And you stand there all the whilst the flesh is biling away from that cat's bones. It may jounce and jimmy under your flesh, but you just keep standing on it. Then when the bones is all fleshened away, you take 'em out and put 'em in a basket. And you go to the creek where there's plenty of swift-running water. You dash all them bones right spang into that swift-running water. And the bone that swims up the creek, that's your man. You grab it, and you keep that bone. From then on you got the power."

"I reckon so, if you think of a bone swimming up stream," I laughed.

"Yes sir, that's what I'm thinking of, 'cause some of 'em do. And that Mayben root doctor he had one them bones. With that bone he would go out in the woods. And any place he come nigh where there was a good root that bone would move in his pocket and cut up terrible. All he had to do was dig down there and get that root. Then he could cut a piece of it and put it in a handkerchief and sell it to you for two dollars and a half. And if you wanted a girl to come to you--with that root in your handkerchief she'd come. Or if a girl wanted a boy to come to her she could just touch the root she had and make her wish, and he'd have to come, too.

"It was a girl lived back down there got one them things. Ugly she was and spraddle-teefied. And bless your soul, where she hadn't had a fellow looking at her before, now they just stood lined up in front of her house waiting to git in.

"As I was going to say--this Hub fellow, he got these snake spells on him. And the mother and the father and the neighbors said we got to take him to that root doctor at Mayben. Well, they went up there to see the root doctor and he said it'll cost you a hundred and eighty-seven dollars.

"That raily shocked 'em. They didn't have no hundred and eighty-seven dollars. They pled and they begged him to do something for their poor Hub anyhow, but the root doctor said--no pay, no taking the spell off, and it's cheap at that. So they come away with Hub back home. And Hub got worse and worse.

"One day there was a big heavy rain and Hub went out of the house into the gyarden with a couple of tow sacks. He loaded them tow sacks full of wet gyarden dirt and tuk one sack under one arm and one under the other and come into the house. And he emptied the dirt out on the kitchen floor. 'Look here, Mama,' he said, 'at the money we got. We got plenty of money, Mama. You take half and papa take half and I take half.' And he mixed his hands all down in that dirt, his face shining like he handling gold.

"'Shut yo' mouth, boy,' his Muh yelled out. 'You're plumb crazy as a bed bug. That ain't no money. That's plain old gyarden dirt.'

"'It ain't gyarden dirt, it ain't,' he said. 'It's money, Mama, money--and you can pay the root doctor now at Mayben. And he'll get me well--get them snakes off'n me." And with that word 'snakes' he begun to squeal and shout and hop up and down.

"His mammy was so outdone with him she tuk a handful of that dirt and swabbed it smack into his mouth. 'That's money for you!' she said. Well, that seemed to raily upset Hub, for he tore out of the room and run upstairs, yelling as loud as he could. And there the snakes went to work on him to a fare you well--so hard that he jumped spang out of the window onto the hard yard ground, and when he hit the ground he hit it running. There was an old bicycle he used to ride laying up against the house had two flat tires. He jumped straggle of that bicycle and tore off down the road trying to outrun them snakes. His mammy yelled for his pappy, and he come in from the field. He got his little old pick-up Ford, and

him and the mammy hopped in and started after Hub. Well, sir, they got that Ford pick-up where it was popping off, but that boy clean went away from there and left 'em behind--yessir, on that old bicycle with them two flat tires. And when he rounded the curve down there coming into Carrboro he was making such speed that bicycle throwed him for a loop. End over end he went through the air and landed in the middle of a big grape vine out in somebody's field. And he got tangled up in the vine, and so his mammy and daddy ketched him.

"Then they sont him off to Goldsboro to that 'sylum place, him whimpering and a-crying not to go. People felt sorry for him, the mammy and the neighbors did, and they all got together and raised a hundred and eighty-seven dollars. And they tuk it up to that root doctor at Mayben and says--'Here, Mr. Doctor-man, is a hundred and eighty- seven dollars--get poor Hub back home again.' And the root doctor tuk the hundred and eighty-seven dollars and said--'Your boy is well.'

"And shore enough, he was. Down in Goldsboro they checked, and at the same minute that the root doctor said them words, Hub come to hisself in his natcheral mind.

"They went and got him and brung him home, and he had plenty of good sense from that day on. He weren't never bothered by snakes no more. Later on he moved up North. They say he's doing well up there--married and got a family. Yes sir, just the way the root doctor said, a hundred and eighty-seven dollars, and cheap at that."

2. The Bottle with Juice in It

Zonie and I were driving back to town after a visit to my farm out in Chatham County. We passed a little house set off in a field. Zonie pointed to it.

"You see that house, Mr. Green? There was a girl lived in that had a bad spell on her. I knowed her. Yes sir, she begun to waste away, and there was nothing they could do for her. Somebody, they couldn't tell who it was, had put a spell on her, wasting her away. She'd sit around the house and mope and say nothing, all drooped up like a sick pullet. And her mammy went off to see that root doctor at Mayben. He looked at her and said, 'It'll cost you a hundred and eighty-seven dollars for me to cyore your daughter, and cheap at that.' He'd always say - 'cheap at that.' The poor woman didn't have no hundred and eighty-seven dollars, and she come back home all discouraged like. And the girl kept wasting away. Just like in the case of Hub I told you about, people got together and from pity on her and at the church they took up a collection several Sundays, and the mammy washed and hoed and made a few dollars here and there. Finally they got it all together and went to see the root doctor at Mayben.

"'I'll have to come down and see what I can do,' he says. 'This here's a special case. How old is she?'

"And so he did, riding up in a Buick car with a fat yellow boy driving him. And he looked the premises over. Then he looked at the girl and had her to open her mouth, and he looked in the pa'm of her hands and felt her good. He shook his head mighty mournful-like. 'There ain't no doubt about it,' he said. 'She's got a bad spell on her.' Well sir, that root doctor had a little thing in his hand, a kind of wooden thing about the size of a yo-yo with a long needle sticking out of it. And he went round the house with his head bent over holding that thing out in front of him. And, all of a sudden, that needle says 'py-an-ng!' and it shot right out from that piece of wood and out of sight into the ground.

"'Bring a shovel,' the root doctor hollered. 'Here's where you dig.' And they dug, and down about two feet they found a little bottle lying on its side there with a cork loose in it. The root doctor took that bottle out and held it up in the light. It had just a little bit of juice in it.

"'That's what was killing of her,' he said. 'Whilst this juice leaked out her life was oozing away. We got here just in time, for there's just about enough to last another day. Then she'd a-been gone from here to come no more.' So he remmed the stopper in tight and put the bottle back in the hole right end up--'to rest there,' he said, 'till the judgement day.' And they filled the dirt back in. And when they'd done that the girl shook herself, broke out all of a sudden in a happy smile and laughed.

"'I feel better right now,' she said. And so she got well and mended fast. Yes sir, say what you please, them root doctors got power, and if I ever get a spell on me I'm sure going to raise me up a hundred and eighty-seven dollars and pay one of 'em to save me."

3. Henry's Dream

Me and my wife were walking in a thick woods (Henry said). We were young again--just the way it used to be a long time ago--and I was a-lovin' her some and she was loving back at me. Finally I set down on a log and took her in my arms and we locked our necks together and we loved for a long time.

Purty soon she said, "Henry, I'm plumb perished for water. I got to go down to the spring yonder and get me a drink."

Right then I felt fear. You know what it is to feel fear, Mr. Green. It just comes all over you. So it come all over me there in that deep woods.

"Honey," I said, "I don't want you to go down to that there spring. Let's get away from here and go home. I feel oneasy."

"I got to have me some water," she said.

And even way back then she was kinda hard-headed--though she's much harder-headed now. And beg and tell her about how oneasy I felt as I would, she wouldn't listen.

I don't know what it was that made me have fear like that--just some sort of feeling. Anyhow, off she went down through the woods to the spring. Whose spring it was I don't know. It was just a spring there in them deep woods. Then I hurried after her. But she was faster than me. She always was. And when I come to the spring I saw her dipping up a gourd of water and raising it to her lips to drink. Pim-blank at that minute I saw him--the thing that had made me feel fear in the dark woods. He was a man and yet he weren't a man--a kind of a mixture of man and varmit--with hoofs. I didn't see him clear, maybe felt him more than I saw him. She looked up from her gourd of water and let out a scream and right that minute this man-varmit sprung on her and started gobbling at her shoulder. And then she was goned--just faded out, was gone.

I let out a loud yell and tore down the hill, and I run up to this varmit-man and begun to fight him. And then I would feel him gnawing at me, too. He was gonna devour both of us.

Lord, he was a thing--bigger'n a mule--black--his eyes like big firecoals, and his hairy arms reaching out in great bat wings and his tushes shining like a bodacious razor-back hog.

Now I have hearn tell that if you call the name of God in your trouble help is liable to come. So I squealed out as loud as I could, "Oh, Lord God, oh master in heaven, save me!" And no sooner had the words come out of my mouth than that man-varmint was gone--just gone the way you might say a bunch of smoke is gone when you wave it away with your hat, and there stood my wife again.

And she was a-crying, and I put my arms around her and told her not to worry, that the good lord God was looking after us.

"I don't want no water now," she said.

"That's good," I said. "Come on, we'll go home."

And with my arm around her I started up the hill. The woods were thick and there weren't no path. We kept a-going and kept a-going and I begun to be oneasy again- not like the other oneasiness--but a kind of a blue-Monday feeling.

Finally I said to her, "We're lost."

"We got to keep going through these dark woods," she said.

And so we did.

And the light seemed to kind of go out of the sky, and it was the same as if they was a 'clipse over the world--not ezzactly daydown darkness, but a kind of eclipse darkness. But we kept on pushing through the woods, and once more I put up a kind of a prayer. I tell you, the moster in heaven has got the power. Hardly had I finished the prayer when there right in front of us was a field and a fence and a little road leading by that fence on to a house that set over there from the side of the hill. We made our way straight to that house. There was a little boy, a little white boy, playing out in front of the house. How I knowed it I don't know--but he must be a servant to the man that owned the house.

"Can you tell me," I said, "how I can get back to Tear?"--that was the name of my neighborhood where I was born and where I was wanting to go.

"I can't tell you," said the little boy, "but my master can." And then his master come out from the door and who do you think it was? Nobody else but Mr. Everett Morgan. I had knowed him as a boy.

"Why, bless my soul!" he said, "if it ain't Henry Lee." He come right out of the house and shook hands with me. "And who is this?" he said.

"This is my wife," I said, "and we are lost."

"No, you ain't lost," he said, "because you found me. Well, Henry, I ain't seen you in a coon's age. My, how you have growed, and you're married, I see."

"Yes, sir. I'm married. Can you tell me how to get back to Tear?"

"I sure can," said Mr. Morgan. And then he pointed up the road--for all of a sudden there was a road leading up over the hill. "Just get into that road," he said, "and follow it and you'll come back to Tear and you'll be safe and sound."

"God bless you, Mr. Morgan," I said.

"And bless you too, Henry," he said. "I'm glad to see you."

And so we went on down that road and over the hill and safe home. I tell you sir, just remember when you're in trouble to call on the Lord God and He will provide you with a friend and that friend will show you the way home."

I wanted to ask Henry what he meant by "locking necks together," but I didn't.

QUILTS IN MOORE COUNTY

By Eleanor Driscoll

[Miss Driscoll, of Boston Massachusetts, is a graduate student in the School of Library Science and an assistant in Person Hall Art Gallery. She wrote this paper as a student in Folklore 185.]

The day is set, the ladies meet
And at the frame are seated.
In order placed, they work in haste
To get the quilts completed.
While their fingers fly
Their tongues they ply,
And animate their labors
By counting beaux, discussing clothes
Or talking of their neighbors.

--Anna Bache

This homely verse well expresses the simple pleasures of the old-fashioned quilting bee, pleasures both social and artistic as well as utilitarian.

Quilting is not simply an American folk art. Its origin may be traced back in history approximately two thousand years to the Middle East and India. It is believed that the Crusaders introduced the craft to Europe when they returned from their voyages to the East. The Eurpoean women eagerly adopted the use of quilted materials for bed coverings and for clothing. Soon, accomplished needlewomen realized that quilting might be used not only for utilitarian purposes, but also, with the addition of appliqued designs and elaborate motifs, for decorating their homes.

When our forefathers journeyed to the New World, the quilting frame was often found among the pitifully few household effects they were able to carry. Women recognized the need they would have for supplementing their meager supply of clothing and bedding, and hoped, perhaps, that through quilting they would have a means of brightening their frontier homes.

Quilting has been practiced in this country since pre-Revolutionary days and is still being done in many sections of the United States. The North Carolina Folklore Society was fortunate to have as a speaker at its December 2, 1955, meeting, Miss Flora McDonald, Home Agent for Moore County, who described the interest in quilts in Moore County, displaying beautiful examples of heirloom and recently-made quilts which are owned by current residents of the county.

As a result of Miss McDonald's address, I journeyed to Moore County to explore this rich treasure of quilts. It was impossible to see all of the quilts in a limited period of time; but with the assistance of Miss McDonald, I was able to visit the homes of several women who have representative quilts.

Probably the most energetic quilter of Moore County is Mrs. J. Price of High Falls. Mrs. Price, born in Indiana, has been making quilts since she was five years old. Some thirty-six years ago, she and her husband moved to North Carolina, settling in Moore County, where he is a Quaker minister and a teacher in the schools. Mrs. Price's interests are varied. First, she is herself a Quaker minister. In addition to quilting, she is engaged in breeding chinchillas, is a successful gardener, and has even tried her hand at raising parakeets.

As mentioned above, Mrs. Price started her first quilt when she was a little girl of five. It was a Four Patch quilt, one of the simple patterns on which young girls are usually started, and was made of scraps from her own dresses. In accordance with early custom, each girl in Mrs. Price's family made quilts for her hope chest. The great concern felt for a maiden who didn't have her

"pile of quilts" is expressed in the quatrain below:

> At your quilting, maids, don't dally,
> Quilt quick if you would marry,
> A maid who is quiltless at twenty-one,
> Never shall greet her bridal sun.[1]

One of Mrs. Price's proudest possessions is a Lincoln quilt she made several years ago. This is a copy of a quilt seen by Mrs. Price at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933, where it took second prize. The pattern was designed by Abraham Lincoln's mother and was given to the family of Abraham Enloe, a neighbor for whom Lincoln was named. From this original pattern, Mr. Enloe's daughter-in-law made a quilt which is still preserved.

Another interesting quilt owned by Mrs. Price is a Nine Patch quilt, made by Mrs. Price's grandmother. It is approximately one hundred years old, but the beautiful indigo blue is as fresh-looking as it was when it was made. The Nine Patch pattern has many variations. A diagram of the basic pattern is shown in illustration # 1.

The well-known Pine Tree pattern was used by Mrs. Price herself on a quilt she made some twenty-five years ago. This Pine Tree pattern was used in all of the original thirteen states. The pine tree emblem was also used on early money from the time of the establishment of our first mint, and appeared as well on an early flag. The Pine Tree shilling and flag are gone, but the Pine Tree quilt pattern, one version of which is shown in illustration # 2, still lives.

Star patterns are extremely popular in quilting, and Mrs. Price has used variations of it several times. Among her most attractive quilts is one done in the Blazing Star pattern, a colorful quilt with a white background, green edging, and predominant colors of red, pink, and apricot. Another quilt has been made in the Feathered Star design, which was constructed from pieces of materials in several shades of green. This quilt is especially enhanced by a double saw-tooth border. A third star pattern owned by Mrs. Price is the Star of Bethlehem, a diagram of which is given in illustration # 3. This quilt was made thirty-five years ago by Mrs. Price's sister.

Another quilt made by Mrs. Price several years ago is in the Noonday Lily pattern. Loyal North Carolinians will be interested to know that this is also called the North Carolina Lily, an example of which is shown in illustration # 4.

Another ardent follower of quilting in Moore County is Mrs. W. O. Harrell of Carthage. She is very proud of a Star of Bethlehem quilt which was made by her grandmother some one hundred and twenty-five years ago, the predominant colors of which are brown and white. Quilting evidently runs in Mrs. Harrell's family because she has a beautiful example of the Sawtooth pattern which was given her by her mother. An interesting variation of the Sawtooth pattern is shown in illustration # 7. The colors of this intricate design are primarily dark blue, white, and orange. Another quilt made by Mrs. Harrell's mother is in the Basket of Tulips pattern in green, red, yellow, and white. An interesting feature of this quilt is the fine coin quilting which can be identified by looking on the reverse side.

Variations of the patterns involving flowers are found everywhere. Miss Bess Stuart of Carthage has a quilt done in a Basket pattern which is over seventy-five years old. This quilt was made by her mother. Miss Stuart also has a Basket of Tulips quilt which is very lovely. Some diagrams of the various flower patterns are shown in illustrations # 5 and # 6.

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1. Marguerite Ickis, The Standard Book of Quilt Making and Collecting (New York: Graystone Press, 1949), p. 259.

Fig. 1

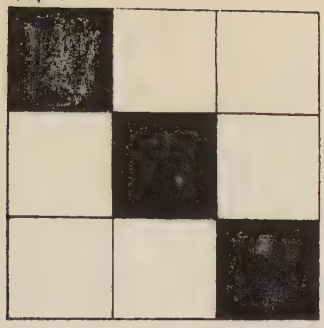
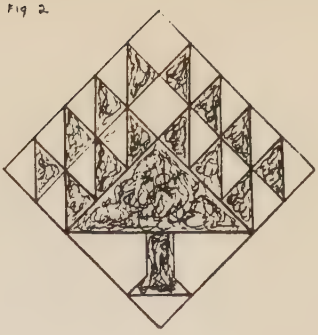


Fig. 2



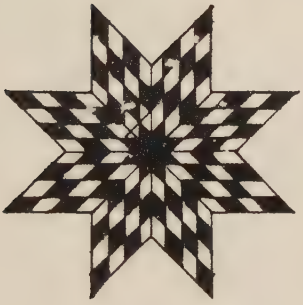


Fig. 3

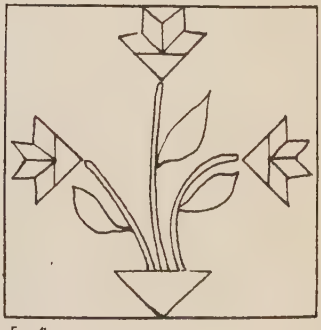


Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 6

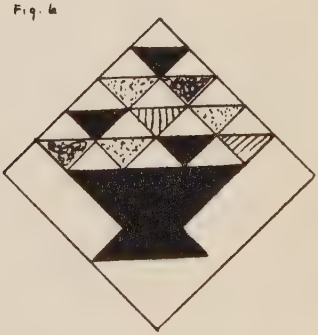


Fig. 7

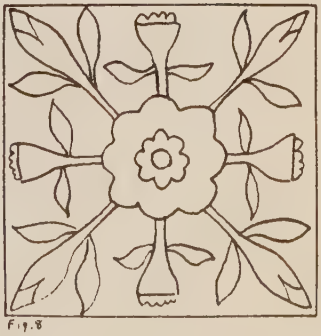


Fig. 8

Two other old quilts owned by Miss Stuart are unnamed. One very closely resembles the Rose of Sharon design, always a popular quilting pattern. Illustration # 8 is a diagram of this design. The reverse of this quilt shows a beautiful ivy-leaf quilting design. The second, done by Miss Stuart's aunt, Miss Mary McFall Stuart, over one hundred years ago, is an original pattern. It is a leaf design in green, white, red and pink.

A quilt made by Mrs. J. A. Denny of Route 2, Carthage, tells an interesting story. It was made by Mrs. Denny in the Flowers in a Pot design. The original source for this pattern was a quilt over eighty years old owned by her husband's grandfather. It was the custom in the foothill country of North Carolina for the women of the community to make quilts for the unmarried men, and the original quilt was made for this purpose. Mrs. Denny has copied the old design and is planning to make quilts for her sons, following the old custom.

An interesting and seldom-seen design is the Queen Victoria's Fan, owned by Mrs. J.B. McLeod, also of Route 2, Carthage. This quilt, done in red, green, white, and rose, was made over fifty years ago by Mrs. McLeod's mother.

The oldest quilt in Moore County was recently displayed in Pinehurst, North Carolina, in the Sandhill Women's Exchange. Made over two hundred years ago in the beautiful Washington's Plume design, it recalls the legend that Carthage was named by George Washington. As a young boy, Washington visited a cousin in what is now Carthage. When discussing the prospective visit with a young friend, Washington learned that the friend was going to Troy. Washington replied that he was going to Carthage and when asked how he would cross the Mediterranean Sea, replied, "It has a good ford." Upon arrival at his cousin's, young George suggested that the place be called Carthage, and so it is today.

It is easy to see from the examples given above that the sources for names of quilts are legion. There are names taken from the Bible, such as Rob Peter to Pay Paul, Joseph's Coat, and Jacob's Ladder. Flower names were common too, as witness California Rose, Feather Rose, Wreath of Garden Flowers, North Carolina Lily, Oriental Poppy, Basket of Sun-flowers. Famous people, such as George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Abraham Lincoln, Dolly Madison, and Mrs. Grover Cleveland, were also remembered by having patterns named for them. Another fertile area for quilt names was the various occupations, such as Carpenter's Square, Chimney Sweep, Farmer's Puzzle, and Rolling-Pin Wheel. Nature has provided us with the beautiful designs and the names of Blazing Star, Star of the West, Snow Crystals, Blue Birds, and Circling Swallows.

Today quilting is used not for bed-coverlets alone, but for skirts, jackets, robes, and many other articles. Women everywhere are reviving this craft of their grandmothers, who quilted from need rather than for pleasure.

From a craft which was once a necessity, quilting has progressed to become one of the folk arts. We read that

> sometimes decorated only with designs of the quilting needle, sometimes richly appliqued with pieced patterns of vivid chintz and calico, or in crazy patchwork style, all quilts are the products of a definite art-craft that flourished at the fire-sides of yesterday, and is still flourishing today.[2]

2. Ickis, op. cit., p.255.

WE'LL TELL 'EM

By Virginia Dober

[Miss Dober is a graduate student in the School of Library Science. She wrote this paper for Folklore 185.]

The "common man," Mr. John Q. Public, the milkman, the seamstress, the dirt farmer, the garbage man, the railroad conductor, the cowboy, the migrant worker, the hillbilly, the postman, the cabbie, and all of the masses who make up the churning, seething billions of humanity who haven't a college degree and more probably haven't finished the sixth grade--these to me are the folk. They are the salt of the earth. Without them the rich, the visionary, the revolutionary, and the professional would be hopelessly frustrated in a world where there was no one to exploit, to transmit ideals to, to arm, or intellectually to lord over. Of this group, the folk, I like to consider myself as one small cell that is a part of the organism.

My mother is from a group known to seven-eighths of the nation as "hillbillies," or "hilligan," or "poor mountain whites." These are the people who had the guts, when the wilderness meant hardship, privation, and possibly death, to go into the hollows, clear the hills with handmade tools, dig huge holes in the earth to bury the boulders in their fields, fight in all the wars the nation has ever had, and possibly see their children grow to manhood without ever wearing shoes because the land was too poor to permit their purchase. It is to this group who were pocketed in the Appalachians for two centuries that I feel I have the strongest ties. They are Americans, pure and unadulterated. They are proud, silent, and sometimes fierce and violent, but always independent. They are the people who say, "I have but my shack and garden but they are mine." In the 1750's my forefathers landed in Philadelphia and settled in western Pennsylvania. They were tired of the despots of the Palatinate and wanted to be free as well as to dream of freedom. After a decade in Pennsylvania they began to drift family by family into the German New River Settlement in Virginia. Here they settled into the ways of good farming and good Germania. As late as 1840 church services were still held in German, in the first church that was founded west of the Blue Ridge. To these people I can say, "I am one of you."

My father came with his family in steerage from Styria, Austria, to New York City in 1910. My grandmother, with her five children, none speaking English, boarded the train and arrived in Columbus, Ohio, where her husband was waiting for her, having first come and earned the money for their passage. Their lot was hard. Language barriers and the lack of education kept them down in a society that had unlicensed selfishness as its creed. It was the day of the sweat shop, and my father as a thirteen-year-old boy was put into a piano factory, where he used to cry at lunchtime as he stood on a chair and looked out the dirty windows. Life could be miserable for a boy even in the land of the free. Home conditions were crowded and unsatisfactory and even though he took his wages home he soon began to fend for himself and began staying in the barn loft of a kindly German doctor who soon took him under his wing, gave him a small wage, and let him accompany him on his calls and look after his horses. His love of horses pulled him to the blacksmith shop, where he began to while away his spare time watching the stout men shoe brewery horses, bakery horses, racers, milk horses, city horses, nags, and thoroughbreds. After shooing millions of flies he was finally given small tasks, and so he began a work that was to provide him and his family with a living for thirty-three years. From the hey-day of horses to our mechanized age of today he held millions of tons of horse flesh on his back. It is to these people who have just begun to send down tap roots into America that I can say, "I too belong to you."

English was always spoken in our home, for both of my father's wives were American. My father was widowed when my brother and sisters were eight, nine, and ten. Soon after, he married my mother, who had gone to Columbus after having taught in the mountains of Buchanan and Tazewell Counties, Virginia, where she had to ride muleback five miles each way over the paths (no roads) to get the weekly mail. The public schools are perhaps the greatest homogenizing force in America. None of us in our family ever felt we were "outside," but always a part, and always American. I do not remember, nor do I believe there were, any problems that are usually connected with "first generation" children. Our homelife, as near as I can judge, was quite American, even though we were in the midst of an old German neighborhood. With all these various strains going into our environment, I feel that I am very fortunate, and I feel very much American, for I belong to the very old, the very new, and the assimilated whole.

If I consider myself one of the folk, what are my credentials other than birth? What oral traditions have been passed down to me, and are they still alive so that I might pass them on to my children and those of my kin? Have I forgotten? Have I forgotten almost all the German men I know saying, "The old woman and the broom belong at home," or my grandmother saying in German, "The sow who roots in the most pots ends up eating mast," or my father saying, "It takes a good man to put his pants on standing up," or "Arbeit macht das Leben süss." Have I forgotten as a child hearing "For crying-out loud," "You can tell a housewife by how early she puts out her wash," "Were you born in a barn?" (when one forgot to shut the door), "Shut your tatter trap," "Wouldn't that frost you?"[1], "Wouldn't that rot your socks?"[2], and "As hot as hell on the 4th of July." Or have I forgotten mountain people saying, "Ring a-round the moon, rain soon; Ring around the sun, rain none,"[3], or "Count the number of stars in a circle around the moon in winter and that is the number of days until a snow,"[4] or "The number of fogs in August; the number of snows in winter,"[5] or, "Stripes around woolly worms mean a bad winter,"[6] or "The man in the moon was put there for burning brush on Sunday."? No, I have not forgotten.

If I am one of the folk, do I know any superstitions? Do I believe in them subconsciously? How many things do I do or not do because of them? How many times have I made pillow cases on New Year's Day so that they will hold all the money I will make that year?[8] Why does our family always eat some form of cabbage on New Year's Day?[9] Is it a bad omen for it to rain on one's wedding day? Will dead snakes really crawl off at night? Why is it such a relief to see just a bit of sun at a funeral? Why did the colored janitor at school always say, as he swept under my feet, that I would be an old maid?[10] When served pie, why did the girls at Vashti School, Thomasville, Georgia, always eat all but the tip, then not speak, and back out of the room holding the last bite on the fork? Did they really expect to see their future husbands that night? Why did an old mountain woman tell me that one of her biggest disappointments was that she was not able to name her son "John" after her father for it was bad luck to name for the

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1, 2. Beatrice Chambers, Lake Placid, New York.
3. Grant L. Snider, Price's Fork, Va. (my grandfather, now deceased).
4. G. W. King, Rt. 1, Shawsville, Va.
5. Elizabeth P. Weikel, Shawsville, Va.
6. Kenneth Sisson, Rt. 1, Shawsville, Va.
7. Ed Sexton, Shawsville, Va.
8. My mother, but it is an old German superstition.
9. An old German custom to assure riches in the New Year.
10. Bill Robinson, Shawsville, Va.

dead?[11], And why did my Aunt Pauline always tell me very seriously that I would travel far, for my teeth were far apart? Hundreds of years ago did Chaucer get that idea from the Austrians or did they get it from the "gat-toothed wife of Bath"? Do we believe these things? If we do, why? Who can explain it? Is it that deep fear within each human being, no matter how advanced or civilized, that we do not want to provoke the wrath of those powers we feel are superior to us? Are we still trying to appease them?

Perhaps the medicine man and the "yarb doctor" weren't as wrong as we like to think. Did man in the misty past learn to live so close to nature that she enabled him to cure through the medicaments that were at his disposal? Through the trial-and-error methods of hundreds of generations is it so strange that mold will cure infections or snake root relax the taut nerves? My maternal great-grandfather used regularly to collect his "yarbs," and kept them in store for the year's sicknesses, and he lived to be a very old man, as I shall tell you later. In his day in Montgomery County, Virginia, horse mint tea was the remedy for rheumatism,[12] boneset for breaks,[13] sheep ball tea for the measles,[14] and many more remedies that have been passed to me but that I have forgotten because it is easier for me to buy a box of 4-Way Cold Tablets. Many times I have seen my grandfather and great-uncles put a slice from a plug of tobacco on a cut they got while scything or cutting corn and my great-uncle Will swore the only way to clear up a head cold was to snuff water from a basin. Last winter I paid a specialist $5 to do the same thing "to clear up my sinus." I have had an English-born father in up-state New York tell me that the only thing that saved his daughter's life as an infant when she had spinal meningitis was a plaster from hot cow manure. (This was recommended as a "last chance" by the doctor after he had given the child up.)[15] It is a common practice among the Germans I know for them to drink warmed wine to bring out rashes, to eat fat meat in the winter for warmth, and to drink light wines in the spring to thin the blood. I can distinctly remember revolting as a child of six when I heard that my favorite adult, known to me as "Aunt Polly," a woman then over 75, recommended that a water bug be sewn into a bag and placed around my neck to ward off the whooping cough.[16] I think I said that I didn't care if I got it and died; at any rate, fate almost claimed that bargain. People scoff at the removal of warts. All I know is that a very troublesome one was removed from my hand by rubbing it with half a potato, saying a formula, and secretly disposing of the potato. It might be poppycock, but it worked. Thanks, Bill.[17] On the campus of a most illustrious southern university the hostess of a graduate woman's dormitory told me to carry a buckeye for rheumatic aches, and a woman from the Virginia mountains reluctantly told me that she can cure sprains by a secret formula that was passed on to her by an old man. (This power can be passed on only to one of the opposite sex.)[18] My sister as a teen-ager wanted pierced ears, and "Aunt Polly" agreed to pierce them, but just before the crucial moment my sister backed down. The operation was performed by first thoroughly washing the hands and ears and then rubbing the lobe until numb. A piece of a sliced potato was then placed behind the ear, and the ear was pierced by a sterile needle that was threaded with a boiled silk thread. The thread was then tied, and the girl was to keep working the thread at

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11. Mrs. Sarver, Spruce Run, Va.
12, 13. Ruth Long, Rt. 2, Newport, Va.
14. Mason Long, Rt. 2, Newport, Va. (my great-uncle)
15. Philip Chambers, Lake Placid, New York.
16. Mrs. Pauline Waldschmidt, Columbus, Ohio (now deceased).
17. William Zangmaster, Columbus, Ohio (now deceased).
18. Mrs. Molly Sisson, Shawsville, Va.

times so the hole would form.[19] When I was visiting Carl Scott in Sulphur Well, Kentucky, he said that his father, then an old man, had a posthumous cure for the respiratory ailments of children. Old Mr. Scott was born after his father's death, and so he had this special "power." When his children would ask him if he believed he really did have it he would tell them, "If people believe I do and it gives them peace of mind, I shall breathe down the children's throats when they bring them to me." Once when I was examining an old ledger book from Giles County, Virginia, with the earliest date of 1811, I found this leechdom:[20] "One handful of nettles, one handful of Isph (hyssop?), one handful of sassafras, one handful of sage, one handful of moss off the North side of a Black walnut and that put in three quarts of sweet milk and steam it down to one pint take one half tablespoonful every morning in the decrease of the moon." The writer forgot to state what it was to cure, and so perhaps science has lost the clue to one more "miracle drug." I heard of one cure, or rather prevention, from a farmer in Ohio who practiced it, but I have been too "cultivated" to try. Every spring when the first leaves came on the poison ivy, he would take them with the dew still on them and rub them over his entire body. He said that only once did he ever have a few patches after using this practice.[21]

George Lyman Kittredge said that he was confident that over one half of the world's population still believe in witchcraft. Do you? Of course you don't; but are there any ghost stories passed down in your family? There are in mine. Why do we tell them if we don't believe they are true? Is it to scare the children as they sit around us on a heavy summer night waiting for a storm to break? Maybe, but at any rate there is one that is told about my great-grandfather I'd like to tell you.

My great-grandfather was a Civil War veteran, known to his neighbors as Mr. Pat. The hill area was a section of divided convictions, and everyone in the family says that he fought in the Confederate Army; but I have heard a few rumors and mumblings from those not in the family that he was in the War but on the "wrong side." I have never been able to clear that up. I do believe that he was a man of conviction, and I don't think that he was a coward, for he had too much of the blood from his grandsires who were famous Indian War and Revolutionary officers. At any rate, my great-grandfather helped build the railroads through the New River Valley and in his thirties acquired a fine valley farm and married a girl from another old, well-established family. They lived a quiet, respectable life and had two daughters and three sons. My grandfather was the eldest. When they were past middle age my great-grandmother died and was buried in the old family cemetery on a hill about 500 yards in front of the house. Now, my great-grandfather was a fine-looking man and wore a chest-length beard, but he was unable to run the affairs of the house, and so my grandfather took his family back to the old home place as his own farm was just adjacent to my great-grandfather's.

Toot was a little dog belonging to Grandpa (as he is known in the family), and was his constant companion. In fact, many thought Grandpa was in his dotage, the way he treated his canine friend. My Aunt Helen remembers going to the store many times for cheese for Toot, and she especially remembers the evenings when she and Grandpa and Toot used to sit on the front porch and talk. Often Grandpa would stop and say, "Who's that comin' down the hill? I can't see so good." Each time Aunt Helen would get scared and tell him that she didn't see anyone, but each time he honestly insisted that someone was coming and was dressed in white, but no one ever came to the house. This episode continued as long as my grandfather's family was living with him.

As I said, Grandpa was a good-looking man, and even though he was eighty

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19. Waldschmidt.
20. The property of Mrs. Elizabeth P. Weikel, Shawsville, Virginia.
21. Clarence Whightsel, formerly of RFD, Pickerington, Ohio.

plus he became attracted to an extremely handsome woman in her middle twenties, named Rose, who was a scandal in the community, for she was divorced. To go on, much to the horror of the family, my Grandpa up and married this woman, dyed his beard, and so my grandfather took his family and moved out. She, according to reports and pictures, was likeable and pretty, but the wise old heads in the village said that she married him only for his money. When he had his will changed so that she would get the house and the best 20-acre field (the flattest) they were certain. When his old strong-box chest with all the land patents, important papers, and money was stolen, they were positive. However, my Grandpa was not to be out-smarted; but I shall tell you about that later.

When the grandchildren would go to see Grandpa, Rose would always tell them of the ha'nted spinning wheel that stood in the big room. At night when everyone was in bed, the wheel would spin, and spin, and each time you would go to see who was there the room was always vacant. When the children would spend the night, they too would hear the wheel spin, and spend many a wide-eyed night. There were other strange occurences, and the children always listened fearfully to Rose.

Grandpa sized up the situation and sent word over on Brush Mountain for an old "witch woman" to come and try her luck. Now this was even an odd occurence in those days, for the folk had begun to lose faith in such. The old woman came with the express purpose of finding the thief, and so among other things she took an apple (my great-grandfather was noted for his great variety of apples) and peeled it in a circular fashion, and after various incantations nailed an oddly-cut paper retainer containing the peel over the hearth. She said that as the peeling died and withered so would the person who had caused the trouble. No one but my Grandpa believed it, but they all waited to see.

Within an amazingly short time, Rose, the apple of his eye, began to wither, and within a comparatively few weeks she too joined Grandpa's other wife on the hill. My Grandpa picked the spot but reserved the one between his first wife and mother for his own. Now, whether my Grandpa continued to see white figures coming from the burying-ground or not I do not know, but I do know that no longer did the spinning wheel hum at night. Some say that was because Rose was gone, but some say that it was because one of my great-uncles unearthed an old Indian grave.

My maternal grandmother came from one of the most lovely places I have ever seen. Today, you must laboriously climb up a wagon road in low gear for one mile until you reach the line fence. You pass through a school yard, a pasture field, a wood, and then you are there, but not without risking very probable danger to your oil pan. My great-grandfather Long chose this farm site during the Civil War (he had 'way too many children even to be expected to go), and he and his sons cleared of virgin forest about 250 acres on top of Spruce Run Mountain that is the only true "razor back" mountain I have ever seen. One can actually walk for miles with each foot on a different side. This place is the nearest bit of heaven I know. From the cleared fields you can see into three counties, and you can see the great chains of mountains spreading in a maze before your eyes. As the children grew up, my great-grandfather sold half of his farm to his eldest son Lloyd, who in turn sold it to the baby, my great-uncle Mason. The two farms are completely isolated from all the other neighbors, and the unmarried daughter, Veenie, who mothered the brood when my great-grandmother died in childbirth, daily visited my Uncle Mason and his family until the time of her death, some twenty years ago. She was built a small cabin apart from the old homeplace, which was then occupied by my great-uncle Philip. One day one of my Uncle Mason's family saw her approaching through the fields, but she never came to the house. The next day Aunt Vennie was asked why she didn't come in, and she said that she hadn't felt well and so hadn't come at all. When they told her that Ruth had seen her she became quite upset and took it as a sure sign of her approaching

death. They tried to calm her down. However, soon following this episode she did die.

My Uncle Frank[22] (by marriage) tells of another death sign that seems incredible, but yet--. When a young man, he was clerking in the village store and was staying with the owner, who was a bachelor. Wade Helvey, the owner, was taken ill in bed, and he sent Uncle Frank into the storeroom to get some patent medicine. The store was the typical country store with a counter down each side, a pot-bellied stove in the middle, and chairs around the stove for the loafers. The living quarters are to the left of the storeroom, and to the right is a lane leading to the farm of another of my great-uncles, Uncle Jim Saddler, so nicknamed for his constant association with horses. Uncle Frank heard a horse in the lane and thought it to be Uncle Jim. The front door opened, and since Uncle Frank had only a lantern with him he couldn't see at first who it was. However, upon raising the lantern he could see only a black shapeless form come down one side of the aisle and go out on the other. Being a young man, he was scared. He hurried back to Wade and told him what he had seen, and the poor man got into such a condition that my uncle thought he really would die. Wade kept reiterating that before each death in his family the person always had a sign. To quiet him down, my Uncle Frank got my Uncle Jim to come and say that he had played a trick on Frank, and so they succeeded in getting him calm. (Note: Wade did not die for many years to come, a fact which raises the question, Did Uncles Frank and Jim outsmart the "thing" or are there really "things"?)

Is that all we tell when we sit on the porch waiting for a storm to break? No, if we are going to pass on all the lore of our particular sub-division of humanity we will tell them about such things and persons as Old Man Jewell. Old Man Jewell was a cricket-like man about five feet tall who weighed about 120. He had a lumber mill on the very head waters of the Roanoke River, and in the days when the river had to be forded nine times to get to the old Wilderness Road (now US Route 11) transportation presented quite a problem in the winter. One cold morning when he had a sled of lumber to take out he stopped at the first ford, undecided as to whether the ice was strong enough after the quick freeze. He laid down his reins, walked into the middle of the river, jumped up and down a couple of times, said "Yup," and drove across.[23]

Or if the crowd's a little older, we might remember the story of a mountain farmer with a large family. When his wife's parents died, her younger sister came to live with them (and if we can trust the gossips, did most of the heavy house work). The girl was a soft, lovely thing, and soon there were two sets of his children running around his river farm. Folks say it broke his first wife's heart, but I've heard others allow that she (the sister-in-law) paid for his love in the hard work she did. When the father and both mothers died and the grown children gathered to settle the estate there was a movement underfoot to discredit the love children, but one of the elder daughters, who was outspoken, said, "They've got just as much right to things as we have. We're all Pa's youngin."[24]

Or we might tell them about Zack Price, who ran a wagon transfer business and who was notorious for his illegible handwriting. One day he went fuming into the house and asked his daughter who in the world sent an order like that to him and expected him to read it. She looked at the letter and the envelope and said, "Why Pa, it's one of yours the mail carrier has returned."[25]

If the children are around us once more and the moon is just right and the dew is on the grass and we can hear the bay of some fox hounds far off in the dis-

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22. Frank Olinger, Rt. 1, Cambria, Va.
23. Bip Sisson, Shawsville, Va. (now deceased).
24. This story was told to me by daughters from children of both "families."
25. Olinger.

tance, then we might tell them the story of Grandpa's grandpa and the Indians. They've seen pictures of, and have played around the ruins, of the ancient log house many times; so it won't take them long to visualize the two-story dwelling with a large room and a small room both upstairs and down and with a big fireplace in the downstairs small room. Many nights when bands of Shawnee hunting parties were in the neighborhood they would knock on the door and then the family would uneasily go upstairs. The braves would sit around the fire of the big back log they had brought in and smoke and talk until before daybreak and then would steal out while the family was dozing, leaving a quarter of deer or other gift behind for the hospitality.[26]

Or if it's a fall night when we're in a farm house and are crowded around the stove drinking cider or cracking walnuts, we might tell the story of the moonshiner and the revenuerer. The United States Government was stumped for a long time, and it took a fire to smoke the truth out. An agent was sent into the mountains of Wythe with the intent of ferreting out the still of a known moonshiner. He even arranged to board in the man's house, but still he could not find one trace of any questionable actions. One day the man's house caught on fire and was destroyed and it was only then that the agent found the still in the tiny half basement where the house chimney had furnished the outlet for the smoke.[27]

Or we might tell that wide-eyed lad beside us about the time Old Man Jack killed a rattlesnake in his back yard and after dark decided to cut off the rattles. You might then tell him how concerned he was the next morning when he found the dead snake in his yard with the rattles still on.[28]

We won't tell them everything, though. We'll be passing a lot of it on when we work and in our daily living. The children might visit Mae Hypes and see her make biscuits by pouring all of the wet and dry ingredients into the flour barrel and then mixing the dough.[29] Or they might go up to Uncle Mason's when he is making molasses. Or they might hear that it's poisonous to eat fish and milk at the same meal.[30] They might ask why Grandpa Hansie calls milk toast "graveyard stew"[31] or ask if fish is brainfood.[32] If they go to Mrs. Haas' they might ask why she saves the chicken blood to fry for her husband,[33] or they might go to Uncle George's wine cellar and learn how to make wine,[34] or be glad when the elder blooms are out and are gathered to be fried in waffle dough to thin the blood.[35] If it's Christmas time they will learn to make the dozens of German Christmas cookies (Pffefferniisse, Springerlies, Wandering Jews, Lebcücke, sugar cookies, etc. and, ah, sweetness), if they are girls, and learn to devour them if they are boys. If you're back in the city you will take them at Easter time to the little German bakery to buy the roll dough bunnies the size of the meat platter with a hand-painted egg in its belly. They might hear how to make the ten kinds of cider Aldie Bennington used to make when he was a boy in the Hocking Hills of Ohio: straight, raisin jack, pepermint, peach, etc.[36] And then just for

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26. Family and community tradition.
27, 28. Ray Cornett, Rt. 2, Dublin, Va. (my uncle).
29. Mae Hypes, Rt. 2, Newport, Va.
30. Students in Alleghany District, Montgomery County, Va.
31. My father says it's the last thing they give you before the cemetery.
32. Margie Leary Pifer, Battle Creek, Michigan.
33. Mrs. Paul Haas, Columbus, Ohio. This is very probably a carry-over from the idea of eating animals to get their characteristics (Austrian family).
34. My great-uncle, George Dober, had one entire room of his basement lined with wine kegs. His wine was renowned for its excellence and as with most Austrians I know, I never saw him drink to excess.
35. Mrs. Barbara Dober, Columbus, Ohio (my grandmother).
36. Altie Bennington, RFD, Reynoldsburg, Ohio.

fun we might tell them how Aunt Helen picked the "spinach" that had volunteered from last year and how Uncle Frank said it was the best spinach he had eaten, only to find later in the season that they had been eating "pretty-by-nights."

They'll learn this and more. We can tell them about the last sewing bee we attended, and we might even start them on a top of their own. They'll hear of and see a butchering of all of the work and consequent pleasure that entails. We'll talk about horse-shoeing, and if we know the right places and people, they will see it. We'll also point out Uncle Mason's water system that has ice-cold water coming a quarter of a mile down the mountain in bored-out limbs for pipes; the hand-fashioned wooden gate hinges that operate on a socket principle; and the hollow-log watering troughs. If they're up at his place in the summer they will see him cradle wheat, barley, and oats, and if in the fall they can watch the men in the fields cut the corn by hand. Chances are Uncle Mason will chuckle and tell how his daddy, Montague, didn't receive his wages because he cut 30 shocks of corn in a day and the farmer thought $3 was an outrageous wage to pay any one man. The next day he hired three men who earned approximately a dollar each.

We'll tell the boys about the team pulls and coon chases we used to go to as a child, and as an object lesson we might tell them of that gambling crowd of chicken-fighters in Ohio whose code is very strict. Careful pedigrees are kept of all the roosters, and if one ever turns yellow in a fight he is killed immediately and all men owning stock of the same blood are notified and theirs, rooster and hen, are destroyed. Yes, and we can tell them how to tell when the air is just right and how the moon has to be, to be able to do the best coon hunting.

Yes, we'll tell them these things, for we can't help doing so. They are deeply rooted in the warp and woof of our make-up. We'll tell them even if we don't believe them. We'll tell them even if we preface with "Did you know that your great-great-grandpa believed in witches; but we know better than that." Oh yes, we'll tell to instruct, to entertain, to scare, but perhaps the main reason we tell this lore is that deep within us is the compulsion to pass on what little we have gleaned from the nameless generations who have been before us.

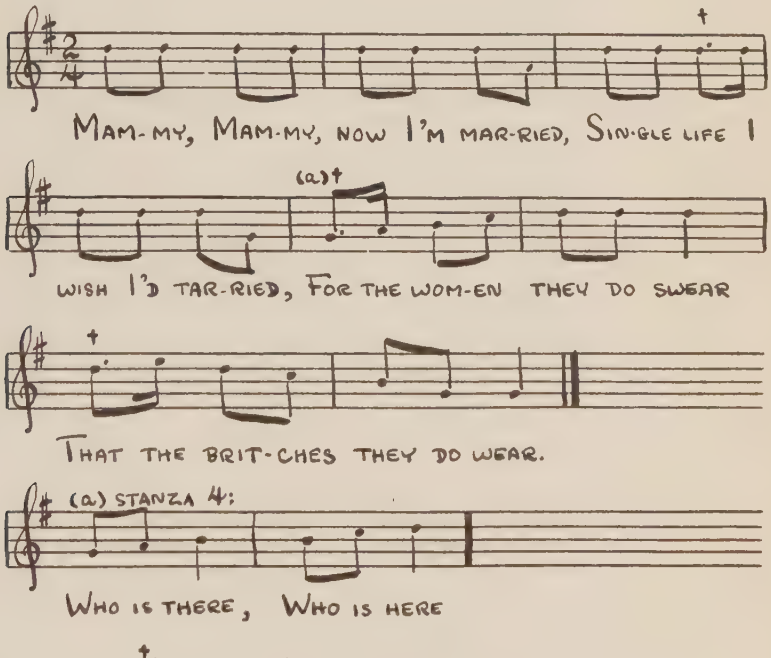
A SHEAF OF NORTH CAROLINA FOLKSONGS

Collected or Transcribed by Dan Patterson

[The following ballads and songs were all noted or transcribed from tape or phonograph recordings or singing, as indicated in the respective headnotes. Mr. Patterson was sketched in NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE, III, No. 2, p. 31. The latest news about him is that during the 1955-56 session of the University of North Carolina he was admitted to candidacy for the Ph. D. degree in English.]

WILLY WEAVER

[Collected by Virgil L. Sturgill (text and phonograph recording) from the singing of James S. Lane, Enka, Buncombe County, N. C. Tune transcribed by Mr. Patterson. The ballad does not appear in The Frank C. Brown Collection, but Mellinger E. Henry published a text, with music, from Varnell, Georgia, in his Folk-Songs from the Southern Highlands (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1938), pp. 304-305, with references to Henry W. Shoemaker's Pennsylvania Minstrelsy, 2nd Edition, and Alfred Williams' Folk-Songs of the Upper Thames.]


MAM-MY, MAM-MY, NOW I'M MAR-RIED, SIN-GLE LIFE I
(a)
WISH I'D TAR-RIED, FOR THE WOM-EN THEY DO SWEAR
THAT THE BRIT-CHES THEY DO WEAR.
(a) STANZA 4:
WHO IS THERE, WHO IS HERE
†SOMETIMES SUNG AS EQUAL EIGHTH NOTES.

1. "Mammy, Mammy, now I'm married,
   Single life I wish I'd tarried,
   For the women they do swear
   That the britches they do wear."

2. "Son, oh Son, oh what's the matter?
Does she lie and does she tatter?
Does she to the tavern go,
'Long with Willy Weaver, O?"

3. "She don't lie and she don't tatter.
She don't sigh and she don't flatter,
But she does to the tavern go,
'Long with Willy Weaver, O."

4. He run home all in a wonder,
Beat on the door just like thunder.
"Who is there, who is here,
Staying all night with my dear?"

5. Into the hall he did enter.
Into the hall de did vent're.
Searched the walls and chambers round--
Nobody there to be found.

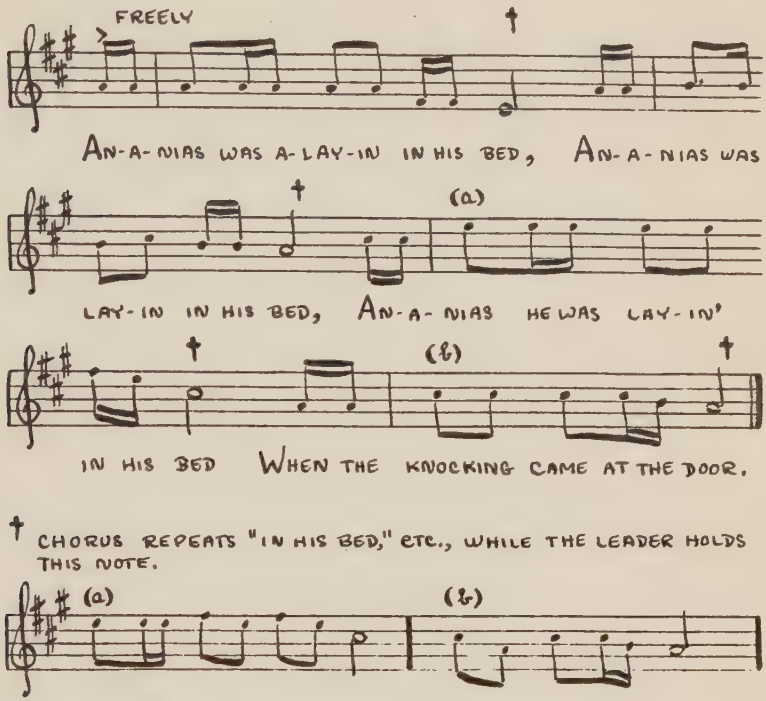
6. Up the chimney he was a-gazing.
Up the chimney he was amazing.
Thar he spied the wretched soul,
A-setting astraddle of the pot-rack pole.

7. He built on a roaring fury.
She cried out, "Oh my deary,
Bring him down and spare his life,
For he has a lawful wife!"

8. Up he re'ched and down he fetched him.
Like a raccoon dog he sheck him.
Beat his back and belly red--
Now poor Willy Weaver's dead.

UNCLE ANANIAS' FUNERAL SONG

[The text of this song, with an account of its spontaneous, improvised, communal composition, was published, without music, in The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, III, 576-578, as from Mrs. Jacques Busbee, communicated to Dr. Frank C. Brown in 1907 and 1915. In the winter of 1956, the Editor of North Carolina Folklore made a tape recording of Mrs. Busbee's singing of it in her home at Jugtown. Mr. Patterson transcribed the tune from the tape.]


FREELY
AN-A-NIAS WAS A-LAY-IN IN HIS BED, AN-A-NIAS WAS
(a)
LAY-IN IN HIS BED, AN-A-NIAS HE WAS LAY-IN'
(b)
IN HIS BED WHEN THE KNOCKING CAME AT THE DOOR.
CHORUS REPEATS "IN HIS BED," ETC., WHILE THE LEADER HOLDS THIS NOTE.
(a)
(b)

2. Ananias he say, "Who dat?" [Thrice]
   An' de Lord he say, "Hit's me."

3. De Lord say, "Whar yo' 'ligion?" [Thrice]
   Ananias say, "S'arch me."

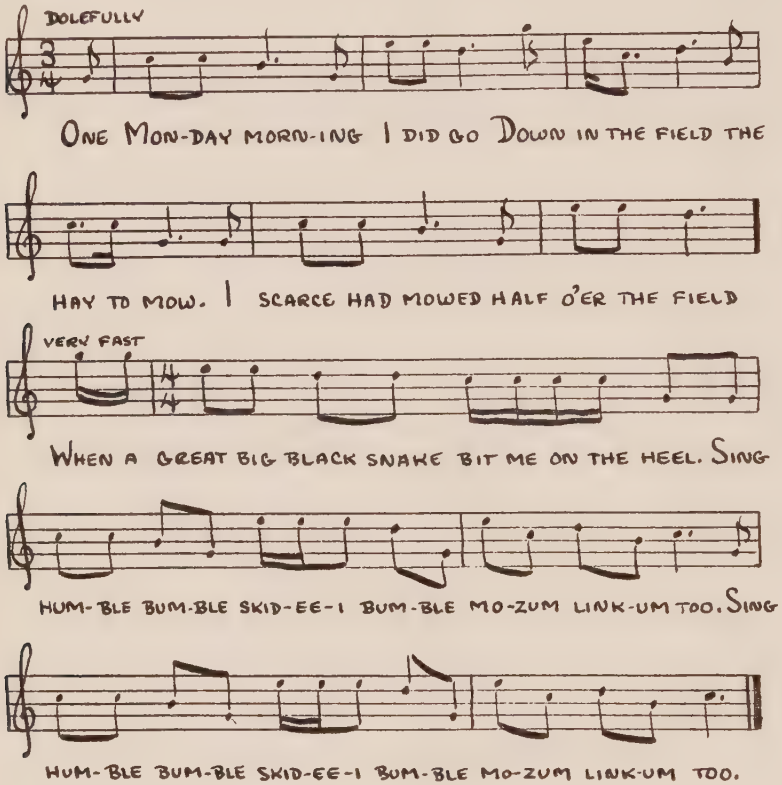
4. "Look in de bureau.
   Look hin' de washstand,
   Pull down de bed-clothes,
   An' see what you can fin'."

5. De Lord say, "Lay down yo' rheumatism," [Thrice]
   An' come along wid me."

6. Ananias he say, "Yes, Lord," [Thrice]
   I'll go along wid you."

SPRINGFIELD MOUNTAIN

[Collected (text and tune) from the singing of Mrs. Lula Atwater Womble, of Raleigh, who learned the song in Orange County in the 1870's. This is generally regarded as being the oldest native American ballad still in oral tradition, going back to an incident in western Massachusetts, about the middle of the eighteenth century. Different texts of it appear in The Frank C. Brown Collection, without music, II, 489-492.

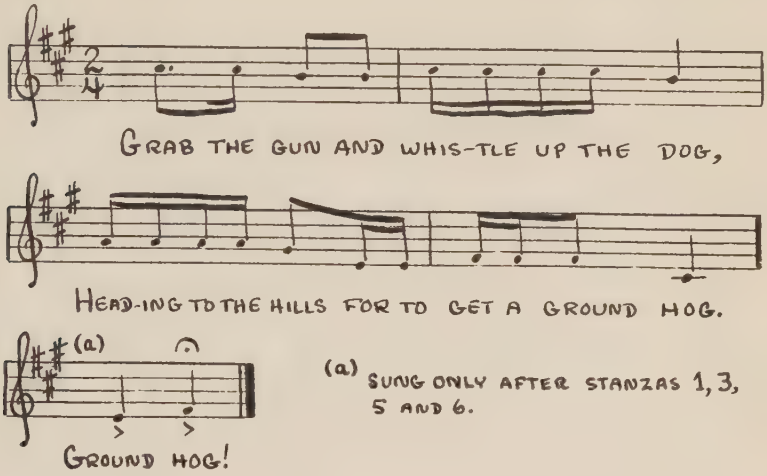

DOLEFULLY
ONE MON-DAY MORN-ING I DID GO DOWN IN THE FIELD THE
HAY TO MOW. I SCARCE HAD MOWED HALF O'ER THE FIELD
VERY FAST
WHEN A GREAT BIG BLACK SNAKE BIT ME ON THE HEEL. SING
HUM-BLE BUM-BLE SKID-EE-I BUM-BLE MO-ZUM LINK-UM TOO. SING
HUM-BLE BUM-BLE SKID-EE-I BUM-BLE MO-ZUM LINK-UM TOO.

1. One Monday morning I did go
Down in the field the hay to mow.
I scarce had mowed half o'er the field
When a great big blacksnake bit me on the heel.
Chorus: Sing humble bumble skid-ee-i bumble
Mozum linkum too.
Sing humble bumble skid-ee-i bumble
Mozum linkum too.

2. "O Father dear, lay down that stick.
Go to the house and go there quick,
And tell sweet Muh to come and see
Where the great big blacksnake has bit me."
Chorus: Sing humble bumble skid-ee-i bumble
Mozum linkum too.
Sing humble bumble skid-ee-i bumble
Mozum linkum too.

GROUND HOG

[As learned by Mr. Patterson in 1950 from Robert Nelson, Arden, N. C.; tune and text noted by Mr. Patterson. Five different texts of the song, with an extensive note, but without music, appear in The Frank C. Brown Collection, III, 253-255.]


GRAB THE GUN AND WHIS-TLE UP THE DOG,
HEAD-ING TO THE HILLS FOR TO GET A GROUND HOG.
(a)
GROUND HOG!
(a) SUNG ONLY AFTER STANZAS 1, 3, 5 AND 6.

1. Grab the gun and whistle up the dog,
   Heading to the hills for to get a ground hog.
   Ground hog!

2. Up on the hill, behind a log,
   Finger on the trigger and my eye on the hog.

3. The gun went boom, the hog went zip,
   And I grabbed that hog with all my grip.
   Ground hog!

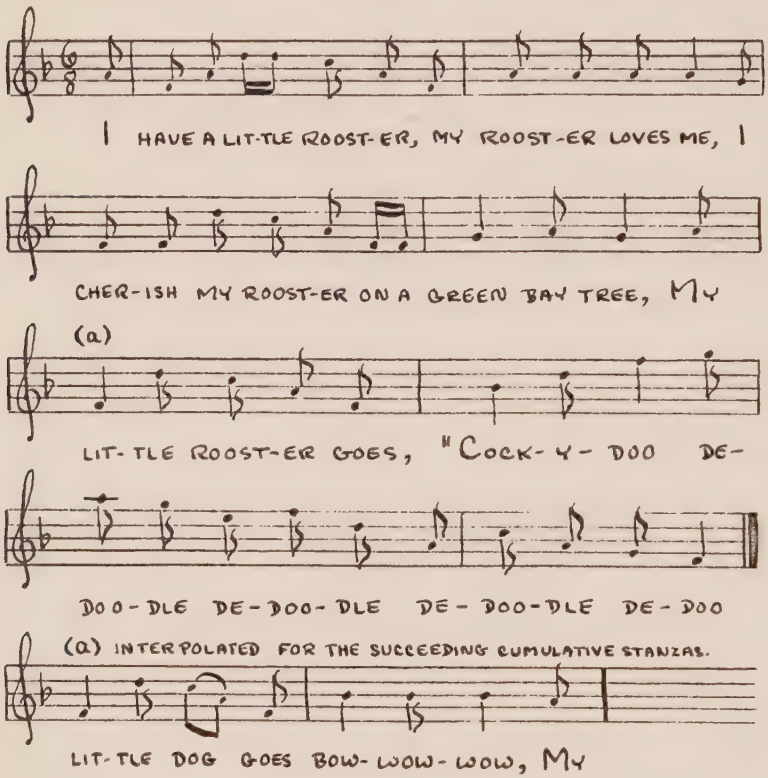
4. Took him home, put him on to bile.
   Good God A-mighty, you could smell it fer a mile!

5. Here comes Sal with a snicker and a grin,
   Ground hog gravy all over her chin.
   Ground hog!

6. I skinned him out and tanned his hide,
   Made the best shoe strings that ever was tied.
   Ground hog!

I HAVE A LITTLE ROOSTER

[Learned by Mr. Patterson in 1953 from C. C. Brooks of Miller's Creek, N. C., a student in the University of North Carolina. Transcribed by Mr. Patterson. Compare "Barnyard Song," Frank C. Brown Collection, III, 172-'73.]


I HAVE A LIT-TLE ROOST-ER, MY ROOST-ER LOVES ME, I
CHER-ISH MY ROOST-ER ON A GREEN BAY TREE, MY
(a)
LIT-TLE ROOST-ER GOES, "COCK-Y-DOO DE-
DOO-DLE DE-DOO-DLE DE-DOO-DLE DE-DOO
(a) INTERPOLATED FOR THE SUCCEEDING CUMULATIVE STANZAS.
LIT-TLE DOG GOES BOW-WOW-WOW, MY

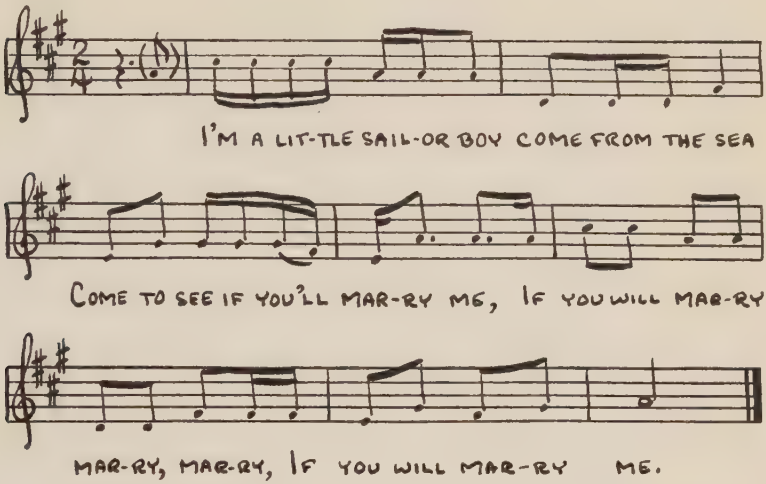
1. I have a little rooster, my rooster loves me,
   I cherish my rooster on a green bay tree,
   My little rooster goes, "Cocky-doo
   de-doodle de-doole de-doodle de-doo."

2. I have a little dog, my dog loves me,
   I cherish my dog on a green bay tree,
   My little dog goes, "Bow-wow-wow."
   My little rooster goes, "Cocky-doo
   de-doodle de-doodle de-doodle de-doo."

(As many other stanzas may be added as the singer has memory enough to sing.)

I'M A LITTLE SAILOR BOY COME FROM THE SEA

[Collected and transcribed by Mr. Patterson from the same informant noted above. This is a variant of the old English song usually known as "The Keys of Canterbury" or "Paper of Pins."]



1. I'm a little sailor boy come from the sea,
   Come to see if you'll marry me,
   If you will marry, marry, marry,
   If you will marry me.

2. You're a little sailor boy come from the sea,
   Come to see if I'll marry thee,
   But I'll not marry, marry, marry,
   But I'll not marry thee.

3. I'll give to you a paper of pins,
   And that's the way our love begins,
   If you will marry, etc.

4. I'll not accept the paper of pins,
   If that's the way our love begins,
   And I'll not marry, etc.

5. I'll give to you a dress of red,
   Trimmed around in golden thread,
   If you will marry, etc.

6. [Reply]

7. I'll give to you a dress of green,
   That you may dress just like some queen,
   If you will marry, etc.

8. [Reply]

9. I'll give to you a little poodle dog,
To go with you when you go abroad,
If you will marry, etc.

10. [Reply]

11. I'll give to you the key to my heart,
That we may wed and never part,
If you will marry, etc.

12. [Reply]

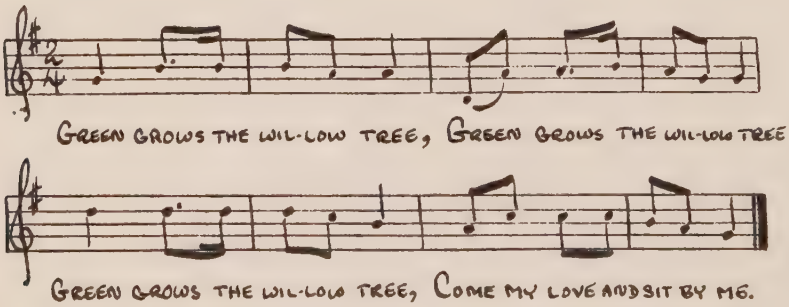
13. I'll give to you the key to my chest,
That you may have money at your request.
If you will marry, etc.

14. [Reply--of acceptance]

15. Uh-oh boys, don't you see,
She wants my money, but she don't want me,
And I'll not marry, marry, marry,
And I'll not marry her.

GREEN GROWS THE WILLOW TREE

[Collected and transcribed by Mr. Patterson, with the note: "Traditional in the family of D. G. Watkins, Blanche, N. C. This song accompanied a game which was played as follows: Two chairs were set side by side facing in opposite directions. In one sat the person who was 'It.' All the other players joined hands in a ring around the chair and danced a twisting dance as they sang the first stanza. At the conclusion of the stanza the 'It' chose a partner from the dancers, who thereupon sat in the vacated chair. The dancers began circling again, singing the second stanza, at the end of which the 'It' kissed his partner and rejoined the dancers in the circle. The first stanza was then sung again, and the song was repeated as long as was desirable." Thus the song is played a good deal like "Hog Drovers (Swine Herders)," for which see A. P. Hudson, Folksongs of Mississippi 296.]



1. Green grows the willow tree,
Green grows the willow tree,
Green grows the willow tree,
Come my love and sit by me.

2. On the bank the rushes grow,
On the bank the rushes grow,
On the bank the rushes grow,
Kiss your love and let her go.

THE "LOST" BALLAD OF GEORGE COLLINS

By Virgil L. Sturgill

[Mr. Sturgill is a native of Kentucky and a graduate of the University of Kentucky. He is pscychometrist in the Veterans' Hospital at Oteen, near Asheville, North Carolina. A regular attendant of the Carolina Folk Festival, he has a large repertory of folksongs which he learned in Kentucky and later in the mountain region of North Carolina.]

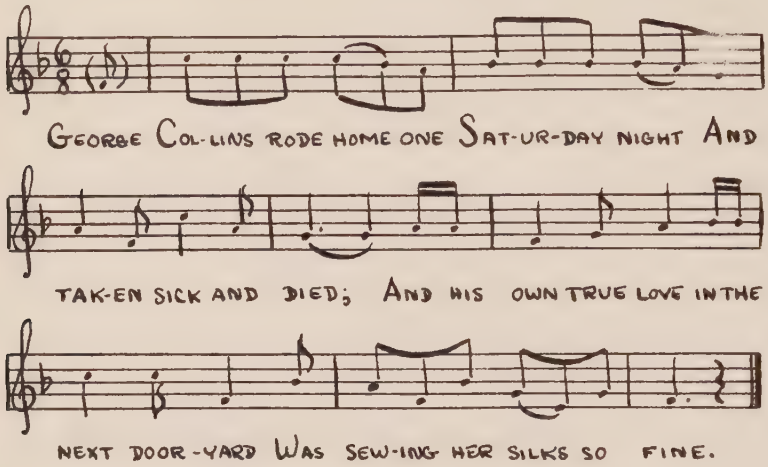
This is the story of a "long-lost" ballad that hasn't been lost at all. This, too, is the story of how the "lost" ballad of George Collins (or "Tom Collins" if you prefer) was found; how one version of it, at least, has been recorded for posterity here in the folk-song treasure trove of Western North Carolina.

My special interest in this ballad stems from an article by John Parris entitled "Long-Lost Ballad Is Found." It was published in the Asheville Citizen-Times June 15, 1955, and was one in a series of articles by Mr. Parris on folksongs and related subjects under the general heading "Roaming the Mountains." I had heard of the famous old English ballad of "Lady Alice" and its American counterparts, but never had I heard of "Tom Collins--him of the demijohn, the fiddle, and the rifle." Mr. Parris' tale of this mountain desperado was--and is--most arresting:

> "Somebody wrote a ballad about Tom, I said, although there are some who say it was about George Coggins, another mountaineer. I can't find anybody who knows the words of the song which I had heard so long ago and forgotten.
>
> "But I know the story. How Tom ambushed his enemies one day, wiped off the leader of the opposing faction and got a bullet in his lungs as final payment. Tom went to a neighbor's house and drank his fill of corn. Then he went home and died---for legend has it that Tom Collins lived in the Smokies when this was still wilderness."

It is unfortunate that Mr. Parris is unable to recall the "Tom Collins" ballad, though this is easily understandable. I, too, have been tormented for years by the "ghosts" of more than one ballad inherited from my youth in the hills of Kentucky. Many of these old songs of the long ago are fragmentary, and the passing of the years has not helped in my recalling them either in whole or in part. But even these fragments hold a fascination for both the scholar and the singer of folk-songs, who enjoys nothing better than occasionally "unearthing" one of these rare "finds." Too often these searchers are compelled to settle for versions that are second-best, or for nothing at all that is new or original. Luckily, in the case of the "Collins-Coggins-Scroggins complex," this quest has been rewarded by a happy compromise. It is the "George Collins" version submitted by James S. Lane of Enka, Buncombe County, North Carolina.

Mr. Lane, who was "born and raised" in Western North Carolina, states that he learned the ballad from various members of his family "who have been singing it for as long as I can remember." His version goes as follows:


GEORGE COL-LINS RODE HOME ONE SAT-UR-DAY NIGHT AND
TAK-EN SICK AND DIED; AND HIS OWN TRUE LOVE IN THE
NEXT DOOR-YARD WAS SEW-ING HER SILKS SO FINE.

1. George Collins rode home one Saturday night
   And taken sick and died,
   And his own true love in the next door yard
   Was sewing her silks so fine.

2. When she heard that her lover George Collins
   was dead,
   She laid her silks aside.
   She bent her head on her lily-white knee.
   She wept, she mourned, she cried.

3. "Mary, O Mary, get up from there,
   Why are you crying so?
   There's many a young man a-standing round
   For to see you weep and mourn."

4. "Mother, O Mother, I know there are t'other
   Young men for to see me weep,
   But I've followed George Collins all through life,
   And I'll follow him to his grave.

5. "God pity the dove who mourns for love
   And flies from pine to pine;
   Be ye as true to your own true love
   As I have been to mine."

There you have it--words and music--in the clear, strong voice of a man who, despite his youth, is definitely in the true folk tradition. This version--shorter than most of the more than two-score I have studied--possesses three ingredients common to them all. A man comes home (whether it be on "a Saturday night," a Wednesday night, or any other night, is immaterial); his sweetheart (regardless of whatever name the unknown minstrel has given her, whether "sewing her silks so fine" or "mending her midnight quoif"), soon learns of her lover's death, is suddenly "taken sick and dies," and is buried beside him. The "mourning dove" theme rounds out the lachrymose narrative and lends the necessary funereal tone designed to gratify the most maudlin of the sentimentalists.

With all due respect to the "George Collins" and the "lost" "Tom Collins" versions, neither has anything new to offer. There is not an indigenous stanza in either of them. The general pattern (expressed in the former and implied in the latter) is identical with most versions, whether very old or of later vintage. In every instance they all stem from the "Lady Alice" versions sung by the peasantry of England centuries ago and in America from as early as 1806.

Two other North Carolina versions employ the names of "Giles Collins" and "George Coggins" as hero of the tale. The name of "Giles Collins" is also used in a South Carolina version found in Reed Smith's South Carolina Ballads, page 143. Unlike the "Mary" in the Lane ballad, the South Carolina heroine is called "Marrie." In each instance, the girl's mother is distressed "to see her crying so," and mildly reprimands the young lady for paying no heed to the "many young men who are standin' round" and who might make for her a better husband than the somewhat indefinable "George Collins," the rum-soaked mountain desperado, "Tom Collins," or any other name that my be given to the object of her undying affection.

No less than twenty-five versions of the ballad are known to be in print. They help to bridge the gap but do not fully explain how a noble English lady's story of frustrated love should be reinacted in the life of a simple mountain girl in far-off America, and how each of them followed her man to the grave. The elements are there, however, and they have been, down through the centuries. Perhaps the tradition can be best stated in the words of another mountain woman who learned the song from her mother (who, in turn, learned it from her mother)— "on back into the old country and across the sea."

Yes, like old soldiers who never die, good folk songs don't die either. They persist, as in his instance, --down to the present day. But whether you choose to designate this as the ballad of "George Collins," "Tom Collins," "Giles Collins," "George Coggins," "John Collins," "Johnny Collins," "Young Collins," or "Giles Scroggins," it adds up to the same thing, --an interesting tale interestingly phrased and sung. We are grateful to John Parris and to James S. Lane for arousing our interest in this "lost" ballad of "George Collins," which was actually never lost at all.

Asheville, North Carolina
January 1, 1956

A FOLK SAYING OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

By S. S. Brown

[Mr. Brown was sketched in North Carolina Folklore, III No. 2, p.

I am sure that the old mountaineers of Western North Carolina remember the old saying that was so often used in arguments, "You don't know your ass from a hole in the ground." But I doubt very much if there are many who know how this saying originated. So I am giving it here as told to me.

A man had a jackass that he let run loose in the pasture with the other stock. The only way he could catch the jack was to go into the pasture before daylight, slip up, and jump on him. So one morning before daylight he went out to the pasture to hunt for his jackass. He saw a dark-looking spot that he thought was his jackass; so he slipped up as close as he dared and jumped----when to his consternation he landed in a big hole in the ground; therefore he did not know his ass from a hole in the ground.

DECEMBER 1955 MEETING OF THE FOLKLORE SOCIETY

The North Carolina Folklore Society held its forty-fourth annual meeting at The Sir Walter Hotel in Raleigh on December 2, 1955. The program included a paper by Dr. Warner Wells, of the U. N. C. Medical School, translator and editor of Hiroshima Diary (Chapel Hill: U. N. C. Press, 1955), on "Folklore of the Hiroshima A-Bomb"; an exhibit of rare old quilts from Moore County and a talk about them by Miss Flora McDonald, Home Agent of Moore County (see Miss Eleanor Driscoll's paper and illustrations in this Number of North Carolina Folklore); and "A Garland of North Carolina Folksongs," by Mrs. Betty Vaiden Williams of Raleigh. Officers elected for 1956 are R. M. Grumman, President; Mrs. O. Max Gardner and R. M. Walser, Vice Presidents; and A. P. Hudson, Secretary-Treasurer. During 1955 the paid-up membership increased about 20% over the preceding year. Two issues of North Carolina Folklore, vol. III (July and December), appeared, attracting favorable notice of other folklore publications. (Many of the great libraries of the country are now subscribers.) Officers and members of the Society participated in the ninth annual Folklore Festival at Chapel Hill in April.

NINTH ANNUAL CAROLINA FOLK FESTIVAL

By Arthur Palmer Hudson

The Ninth Annual Carolina Folk Festival was held this year on April 5-6 in Memorial Hall of the University of North Carolina campus. The date and the site constituted a change from the plan of former Festivals, which had been held in Kenan Stadium on three successive evenings during the second week of June. As usual, the Festival was sponsored by the University Folklore Council and conducted by Bascom Lamar Lunsford of South Turkey Creek, near Asheville.

The more restricted setting made for better control of the program and, on the whole, perhaps for better execution. With one or two exceptions, however, the ingredients were typical: string band performances in the hillbilly manner; banjo, guitar, fiddle, and other instrumental solos, and various combinations, in which George Pegram (favorite individual performer) and Red Parham played conspicuous and well-applauded parts; folksinging, both good and bad, some of the really good singers not giving out their best and most genuine songs; square dancing, some of it, especially that of Mrs. Willis Wynn's teen-agers' handling of true old English and early-American examples and that of the Occoneechee Boy Scouts' Indian tribal dances, being very good; a few exotic numbers, like the Brahmin and Tamil folksongs of Miss Lakhsme and Dr. Vasantini of India; and the specialties, such as the appearance of Lamar Stringfield, who played (albeit badly) a guitar version of "Cripple Creek," the basis of his Pulitzer Prize-winning suite, In the Southern Mountains. A few good singers of previous Festivals appeared, among them Miss Eunice Arnold of Raleigh, whose selections were better than usual, and Joan Moser of Swannanoa, whose style is also pure and sweet. A few new singers showed up, among these John Parker of Chapel Hill, whose ballads with guitar accompaniment were well received. Chick Martin (banjoist) and little Dickie Wright (clog-dancer) were vociferously applauded. Major Jack Smith, playing his bagpipes for the Scottish Highlanders Dance Team from Fayetteville, was a popular innovation.

Unquestionably, the most finished and beautiful feature of the 1956 program was the singing and dancing of the Israeli Troupe, brought to Chapel Hill by The Hillel Foundation and contributed to the Festival. The contents and style of the songs and dances were as authentic as the execution. The audience saw and heard some of the most ancient folklore in the world, purveyed by people who understood and felt it. The Israeli singers and dancers may be professionals, but they displayed a freshness and a simplicity of attack that are implicitly possible for the effective handling of all folklore, and they did not feel it necessary to mow and grimace and contort themselves and "whoop it up to get it across." Their performance had the grave and stately dignity of the ancient rituals in which many of their songs and dances were originally set, or the naturalness and spontaneity of the desert and the pastoral landscape. They used the simplest instruments--no "'lectric guit-tars" or other gadgets. Their costumes were plain and native. A pity that our young "folk" performers probably did not learn anything from them!

Again, in 1956, in spite of indoor accommodations and good publicity, the audiences were disappointingly small. University students and Chapel Hill residents attended only sparsely.

It is beginning to be self-evident that the Festival, in order to have large audience appeal, must broaden its base and improve its quality. There is a sameness in the elements, a monotony of style, and a degree of cheapness and vulgarity (in the older sense of the word) which deter people from wishing to attend more than once--indeed, a good many cultivated people, who might become interested, from coming at all. As it has been patterned, it is not much more than an apparently spontaneous (but really synthetic) big frolic or jamboree, on the order of "The Old Barn Dance"--amusing when first seen, but likely to become stereo-

typed and to pall; liable, too, to become a bad imitation of cheap radio and television shows by professionals who learn their stuff from other professionals, two or three times removed from the real folk.

The program needs broadening, to include folk arts and crafts, and more varieties of representational folklore. The music should be improved by the inclusion of a few good North Carolina compositions (of which there are several) based on folk themes, well played, not by professionals (though if they want to play and are North Carolinians all the better) but by trained amateurs. The Festival should utilize more and more the considerable body of published folklore material which scholars, musicians, and artists of the state who know what folklore is have been gathering all these years. After all, Chapel Hill is the seat of a distinguished university which has done notable things in folklore. The general level of taste in entertainment should be higher and better informed than that of a state or county-fair crowd, and the raw material for popular entertainment should be of better quality. Folklore is an art (hence festivals), as well as a science (professors) and materials.

The programs need more order and direction. There is none better than Mr. Lunsford for getting together a crowd of several hundred North Carolinians who know the folklore of their state and their particular localities in its concrete and current forms. Mr. Lunsford knows more folklore in its native habitat than anybody else in the state. His own taste is instinctively good. But Mr. Lunsford is such a director of folk festivals as N. B. Forrest and U. S. Grant were soldiers. Forrest and Grant were not "book" soldiers. About all they knew of the art of winning battles was to round up a lot of stout, tough, fighting boys, turn them loose, and let them slug it out, without spoiling sport by a mess of tactics and orders. And they won battles in their day. But the trouble with such generals is that times change; wars can't any longer be won that way. Neither can good successful festivals be run that way in a sophisticated community like Chapel Hill. People get bored with whoopee if it lasts too long or they see and hear it too many times; some people just don't like it at all. It is with a folk festival as with a Spanish bull fight. A corrida de toros is not a crowd of undisciplined boys and bulls turned loose in a bull ring to fight it out, like Forrest's and Grant's soldiers. It is a stately and ritualistic drama of courage and skill between well-trained boys and well-trained bulls. The antagonists and protagonists are always the same, and the general pattern is the same; but, bulls and boys being what they are, though the acts are ordered, things never happen exactly the same way. There are tense and tragic moments, but tension and tragedy are calculated and channeled, and all the participants--toreros, attendants, audience, even the bulls--know what is expected of them and how they are to do it, and they usually do it. The result is a work of art constructed out of simple, elemental, native materials. When it follows the pattern on a high line, it is drama, and people feel that they know why it is drama. When it diverges from the line, or follows it on a low level, it is comedy, not senseless buffoonery. So, what the Folk Festival needs is for Mr. Lunsford to pick his performers a little more carefully and to work out an ordered program on a level high enough and in a spirit fresh enough to draw men and women and children from chimney nooks and television sets.

Something like the Dogwood Festivals of the 1930's may be the answer to the problem of what to do with The Carolina Folk Festival. (For an account of The Dogwood Festival, see my article in a bulletin soon to be issued by the Extension Division of the University for the North Carolina Federated Music Clubs.)